

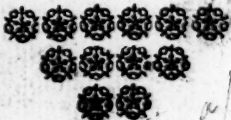
THE  
CENSORS CENSURED,  
IN A  
Brief Discourse:  
To which is adjoyned the  
AUTHORS LETTER  
TO AN  
*Anti-Episcopal Minister Concerning*  
The Government of the  
CHURCH.

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Written in the year 1651. but  
not printed till now.

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*Hugh Edmonds*



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L O N D O N :

Printed for Phil. Stephens at the Kings Armes over  
against Middle Temp<sup>l</sup> Gate in Fleetstreet, 1661.

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CHURCH

WILLIAMSON STREET, NEW YORK



To the  
R E A D E R,

*Courteous Reader,*



Although the many Books which have been already printed in defence of Episcopacy, may seem not only to forestall the credit, but to evacuate the use of future Impressions, about the same subject; yet considering the messe of Confederate Brethren, who are sworn to oppose it, which (being an Oglio of all Sects) is of far greater dimension then the defendant party. I presumed it would not amount to the reckoning of a vanity to enter with my unkeen weapon into the same field: which (though unworthy to be mustered with those forces of wit, that fight for victory) may serve (like

To the Reader.

the attendants of an Army ) to face the enemy. It is the fate of truth for its naked simplicity to be as little known, as trusted, with earthly inhabitants : whereas error, clothed with glossing variety, finds not only acceptance, but maintenance in the hearts of most. What Gangrenes of Heresies, and fretting sores of schismatical opinions have infested the body of our National Church ? since Bishops (the ministerial preservers thereof in soundnesse of Doctrine ) were first divorced from their office, as the History of former ages can yield no examples to parallel, so ( being by Satans subtilty heightened to an exquisite degree of wickednesse ) the possible corruption of succeeding times, will want invention to excel. Such was the sudden growth of greedy innovations in the black art of enmity, against their ancient guides, that experience hath proved them to be a true exception to the Philosophers saying, *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*. And if their master, who raised them to the pinnacle of preferment, had not thrown them down headlong by a timely temptation, they would have all turned conceited Monarchs, and not lookt over, but for the Kingdomes of the earth. It will be as much shame hereafter to report, as it is now grief to remember;



*To the Reader.*

member the fiery generation of those meteors of men, which ( rising by the fall of our great stars ) have vapoured from the Regions both of pulpit and presse, into the houses of the honourable, and musty Cottages of the basest people, deluding them into such a lamentable deviation from their right principles, that the greatest part of them (like benighted Drunkards ) are not yet able to finde the way home. The consideration whereof doth offer us so much occasion, to pity the dangerous estate of their diseased souls, that I could wish no better successe to attend this work, then that, by detecting the malignant distemper of their faults, it may become a direction for their recovery. But knowing that habituated Crimes will not readily yield to a seperation from the subjects that possesse them, and that custome in sin, ( holding reason in bondage to the dominion of sense ) doth seldome nauseate the sinner to a detestation thereof. I am disposed to doubt, that the event will be unanswerable to the scope of my desire. However the chiefeest Part of this Book being written in time of persecution, when Tyranny had staled the Tribes of all honest men in a fitter capacity of receiving wrongs then giving reasons, I shall not now dis-

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*To the Reader.*

own the exposing thereof to publick view, though it happen to make a fermentation of humours in the cholerick stomachs of our English Pharisees. For being set forth with the same intention where-with it was first penned, more to declare my willingness to approve, then ability of mind to defend the right of Episcopal Government. It may not be conjectured to be composed with confidence to confute those that deny, but out of love to confirm them who believe the same.

To thee therefore, Gentle Reader, whosoever thou art of this number, do I principally dedicate this my labour, wherein if thou apprehend nothing deserving thy condemnation, but the truth of my affection to the welfare of the Church, it will be applause enough to satisfy the expectation of

*Thy well-wishing friend,*

HUGH EDMONDS.

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sin natural, so in bodies Politique, there are no distempers more smartly afflicting, than those which invade the most noble parts, and amongst the many causes, which work a solution of unity, in a civill constitution of government, the corrupt humours of a brain-sick clergy are the most intrinsecal. The Truth

whereof, though we have by the sad experiences of our own past miseries been better taught to bewail, than dispute; yet being farther instructed by the present discovery of their propagated mischiefs (notwithstanding the bountiful rayes of mercy diffused amongst them from our *Englands* Sun) we cannot but account it a pitifull folly to commiserate them, who think it a virtue to be cruel to themselves; for they, whom neither the sense of their own sin, nor apprehension of the Kings pardon can reform, must needs be not onely the

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worst of subjects, but men. What lawful ground those Associates have had to shew themselves so lately busie with their tongue-pullies, to draw on a pack of Craftsmen into a Conspiracie of hands, for the raising up of their Presbyterian *Diana*; and by the pionerie of their wits to undermine the foundation of the Kings Authoritie in spiritual affairs, coverteousnesse and pride must be the Advocates, ( though ignorance be the chief witnesse ) in their plea, Should the Grantees of the Church ( because they are the Apostles Derivatives, betwixt Christ & whom there was no temporal jurisdiction interuenient ) conclude for themselves a priuiledge of immunity from the power of Kings in Ecclesiasticalls; There might appear some reason in the face, though no truth in the bulk of the Argument; but for Petit Presbyters who are but under-graduates in spiritual jurisdiction, and, for the outside of their calling, the Bishops workmanship, for such, I say, hoven up with a Timpanie of impudent ambition, to entitle themselves to that, which their second makers with humilitie disown, even in the most Hierarchical order of the Clergie, can be no lesse than an act of capital presumption, and sawcie irreverence, which hath not so much as the countenance of a rational plea to defend it. Amongst the seven things which God hateth, pride is the sin of the first Classis, *Pro. 6. 6* & for its antiquitie of Lordship hath the preheminance, whereby only it cometh to passe ( saith the same wisdome ) that man maketh contention; in exemplification whereof, I have newly observed some stiffe-necked factors of the Presbyterian merchandise so haughtily stubborn in their opinion, that they seem desperately resolved rather to break with their own errors, than bow to the truth, which others maintain, being now fuller of scornfull discontent in the eyes, then heretofore they have been of envious detraction in their mouths, as if ( like the Sun ) they were naturalized to look  
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biggest, when they are going down; and although our Gracious Sovereign; for his complacency and benevolence to all people, doth rightly compeer that Darling of mankind, *Qui neminem à se dimisit tristem*, and for his compassion and charitie is not inferiour to the *Scottish* Monarch, who was therefore stiled the poor mans King: yet the tyrannie of these mens arrogant spirits, will not allow them to pray for this incomparable person by his determinate name, but to present him to heaven in a driblet of words, under the notion only of *Individuum ex hypothesis*, as if *Charles* the Second, wereto them a *Shibboleth*, which they could no more plainly pronounce han obey. It may well therefore be wished, that his Sacred Majestie would in Justice ( which is the root of mercie ) be pleased to doe to the insolent Presbyters, what once the good *Theodosius* said to a contentious Prelate, *Si tu pacem fugis, ego te ab Ecclesia fugere mando*, which would be a readie means to prevent such Church Moths from fretting out the beauty of that garment, wherein they are bred, and to extinguish the generation of Diotrephan Tribes, who ( like intestine worms, maintained by the hospitality of the stomach ) out of a greedie appetite to higher fare, than their Ordinary can afford them, will at last destroy the very body that gave them being. But that their mouths may not be fully stopt, before they have spoken the utmost for themselves, I shall do them that right to declare what I have learned from some of their stars of the first magnitude, by whose influence of wit the lesser lights are supplied with this subtile distinction, which indeed is but an excuse as blameable as the fault, we are, say they, subject to Kings *circa sacra*, but not *in sacris*, whereby they falsely suppose themselves in their ministerial Robes, so absolutely inappropriate to God, that no man can have a Relative interest in them, and, within the pale of the pulpit, to be such a peculiar inclosure from the Com-

mons of the Nation, that they are not base enough for subjection to the high way of the Kings Government, as if their spiritual incumbencie were a decreed exception to the Apostles *Rom. 13. 1. Omnis anima*, and their ordination to teach supream Magistrates an injunction not to obey him. Surely *Hilkiah* (a better man than a Presbyter) was not of their mind nor manners, in his religious behaviour towards his Sovereign, who (though conscious of the Kings youthfull age, more apparently fit to execute the advice, then to command the service of a high Priest,) did not take it upon himself to reform the abuses of the Church, but waited for better authority then his own to legitimate the work, and (which is highly observable) having found the book of the Law, which seemed a proper instrument as well for the Priests custody as use, *2 Kin. 22.* he thought it his duty to deliver it to the King, but he to be kept and read. To make a solemn Covenant with God, *scilicet agere in sacris*, a matter that concerns not the skirts, but the very bowels of Divinity; yet this did *Josuah, Jos. 24.* (who was neither Priest nor Prophet) by his kingly authoritie, engaging all the people in subiection thereunto. *Moses*, though not in office, was yet in act, a Priest by consecrating *Aaron*, whence it is more then probable, that Kings by their unction, are endued with a higher capacity to deal in holy things, than our classical Authors will allow them to be, whose power bearing date immediately from the court of Heaven, makes both their persons sacred, and their names divine, whereby they are not only truly, but solely qualified for Gods Deputation, and so being next to the most High, can neither have superiours nor equals upon earth within their Dominions, they are *Christi Domini*, the Lords own anointed, which denomination was never given to Priest or Prophet, but (as a learned Bishop hath observed) in 33. places of Scripture (where it may be found)

is alwayes spoken either of Christ or Kings. It must needs be then the disease of a loyal heart to remember how ingeniously mischievous some Rebels have been heretofore in maintaining the Kings authority, either coordinate or subordinate to the power of Parliaments, and what use hath been since made of that Hellish Tenent not only for sequestration, but subversion of mens estates, will be easier for our posterity to condemn, than for us to forget. Should our Sovereign Lord the King have been longer deprived of his iust right, in distributing Iustice either by rewarding the vertues, or punishing the vices both of Ecclesiasticall and Civill persons, Gods complaint of Israel might be *Englands* proverbial songs; like people, like Priests, the people would feel the bite of the Priests teeth, the Priests the venome of the peoples tongues, and both the smart of divine judgement, *Ezekiels* foxes would degenerate into *Isaias* dogs, those, who did craftily watch, would greedily eat up the sins of the people, and attend their flocks, as the *Caper-naites* did Christ, to feed their own bellies, and to be clothed with the wool of the sheep, rather than with the Righteousnesse of the great Shepherd. But blessed be the name of the Lord, who hath set the Crown on his Majesties head with his own hands, without the vain concurrence of fleshly armes, whereby he hath revealed, *per me Reges*, to be not only his word but his deed, not permitting the act, but approving the Right of his Reign, which in Truth should be as well a terrour as conviction to the consciences of those who have stamp't it in some peoples brains for doctrine as currant as their Creed, that Monarchical government is but a more noble kind of Tyranny, which hath existence only by Gods connivance, and is rather the rod of his wrath to punish, than the staffe of his love, to support a Nation. Truly, where there is a brimfulnesse of envious resolution to oppose the best, there can be no room for



charity, which submitteth to the worst of Governours, and it may be justly feared, that no true concordance will inhabit the centre, whilst such Heteroclitcs are left to lurk in the circumference of the Church, who will rather pro'esse themselves *St. Peters* animals by standing out in their own conceit, than *St. Pauls* souls in stooping to the authority of their lawful superiours, neither can they be well thought fit Trustees for the securitie of the Gospels treasure, who having once shipwrackt their Allegiance to the King, are still bankrupt of faith and honesty. Those are the old stocks, whereupon Satan hath grafted the variety of Sects, which hath been the shame, and is yet the grief of *Englands* Church, whose first non-conformity to Canonical orders, hath been the very originals, whereunto the many copies of obstinate Fanaticks, that are now extant, have their true reference, who following the tracks of *St. Judes* murmurers, in admiration of some mens persons for advantage sake, do dissociate themselves from the community of Saints, not only in opinion, but practise, than which nothing can be more destructive to the concord and peaceable unanimity of Spiritual Congregations; for as in physical Compositums, a violent disunion of Integrable parts breeds a more dangerous shisme in the body, than a humerous distemper; so in Ecclesiastical corporations, an actual seperation from the Catholick fellowship of beleivers in Gods service is a greater pandor to confusion, than the scandal of a speculative distraction. It is time therefore for our Seminary Presbyters, who have been the Protoplastiques of a Rebellious generation, both in Church and State, to make a confession of their past faults, as well as their present faith to the King. They are now sufficiently read in the book of their own consciences to know, *nemo periculosius peccat, quam qui peccata defendit*, to Apologize for sin is more damnable, than to act it, and not to retract inexcusable errors,

errours, doth as much unqualifie a delinquent for mercy, as the perpetration thereof can adapt him to justice. Repentance, though it may be too soon ended, can never bee too late begun; he, that lives like *St. Lukes* judge on the bench, neither fearing God, nor regarding man, may have the grace to die like the *Jewes* thief on the Crosse, with profession of both; for that power which expressly denyeth forgiveness to one sin only, doth implicitly concede a possibility of pardon to all others. On this consideration it would be worth their paines to translate their Petition for Presbytery into a Suit for Indemnity, and publickly to acknowledge his Majesties Declaration which is the proof of his grace, to be an argument of their guilt, who (like cunning fencers, that aim at the legs, when they intend to verry the pate) under a reformative pretence of destroying those ravenous beasts, which worry the people, begg'd leave of their master to hunt the kingdome, which being granted, they took liberty of themselves to make him their chief game: for it is well known from *Dan* to *Beerseba*, that the credit of their false doctrine was the very leaven wherewith the people were first moulded into a sower lump of armed malice against their Sovereigne.

And I may truly say, it was the unlucky Bontefen, which not only yielded smoak to smother all Treaties into a nullity of successe, but that gave light also to clear the way for more active instruments then themselves to take off the Head of our eternally renowned *Saint Charles*, together with the Government from his shoulders; for although they entred not the Stage with those miscreants that personated *Pilate* in the fifth Act; yet because they appeared with others who playd the parts of *Annas* and *Caiphas*, in the first Scene of the Tragedy, we may justly christen them the Grandfathers in law of that bloody fact, which being unmatchable in humane

mane stories, may be in some sort compared to the crafty complement of the cruel wolfe in the fable, who told the sheep, *Da mihi potum, & ego mihi dabo cibum*, meaning to eat him up for his courtesie. A fact, which as former ages have not been so learnedly wicked to invent, so I hope the future will be more honestly wise than to imitate; A fact, which may schoole our Kings of *England* into a use of the *Italians* prayer, to be delivered from their friends whom they trust, as well as from their enemies whom they fear, and inform the people with the *Spaniards* soul, rather to sheath their swords in one anothers bowels upon private quarrels, than to draw them against their Sovereign in open war.

But, if the Recognition of such an execrable murder be not caution enough for subjects to restrain them from Rebellion, let the memorable example of the *Amalekites* punishment be their exhortation to obedience, 2 *Sam.* 1. 13, 14. who (though a stranger to *Sauls* kingdome, and by them requested to conclude his pain with the inference of death) was by *David's* command for touching the Lords anointed, instantly condemned to loose his life.

If Kings lives then are so precious in Gods account, that they may not be touched in the heat of proclaimed hostility, what a cursed sin must that be, which justifieth those who take them away in cold blood?

By these animadversions I hope the whole host of spirituall officers, who have fought against the Regiment of the Church, will be victoriously fens'd into a unanimous Iudgement, that it is far better for them to have the Apostles doctrine in their hearts, then the *Scots* discipline in their hands, to be content with that estate wherein they have been, then to cover that wherein they ought not to be, to submit to the King in causes Ecclesiastical, rather then by calling his power in question, to abuse

abuse their own authority in the Gospel, to give *Caesar* his, will be no subtraction from their due, had not our Saviour paid for himself and *Peter*, it might be doubted, whether the Clerks of this age (like the old *Egyptian* Priests) would not plead their estates untributary, as well as their offices unsubj. & to the King.

With what tenure of spiritual power they are invested *Jure divino*, none but those Laicks whom the Popes Mandate hath screen'd from the Sun-shine of Gods word, can be ignorant.

The officious Acts of *Jehoiada* to *Jehoash*, and *Nathan* to *David*, are not only presidents to warrant the right, but boundaries to limit the extent of their claim; they must instruct Kings as the one, and may reprove them as the other did, which was not executed by an excommunicative scourge to make *David* do penance for his offence, but with the motion of a meek spirit, to give him a penitent sense thereof; for as the act of reproof argued the King to be Gods subj. & so the mode of reproof maintain'd him to be the Prophets Sovereign.

And thus I believe *Azariah* withstood *Vzziah* by no other force, save that of the tongue, whose aim was to strike at the fact, not the person of the King, to induce him into a conscioussness of his fault, not to require his submission to punishment, which, because immediately inflicted of God, supposeth him priviledg'd not to receive it from man: so that *rebus sic stantibus*, our ministerial Guides have little reason, and lesse grace to pride themselves in their Ghostly authority of rebuking Kings, such verbal Reprehensions being no more then religious servants (not adventuring beyond the sphere of their calling) may lawfully practise towards their

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ungodly masters ; for as it is the Resolve of Divines, that in case of necessity *Quil bet Christianus est sacerdos*, so it is not only the liberty, but the duty of every one in Gods case boldly to reprove an offending brother, as I think my self bound to tell the associated brethren, that they have highly wronged the Majesty of God & the King, both by their orall and manual prolusions to introduce a new fangled government in the Church, & that it will be more safe for them to observe the duty of looking into their own, then the false commission of overseeing their superiours actions, the performance whereof might happily make that saying *ex culpa sacerdotum ruina populi*, to be as well known to themselves, as felt by others, and convert the hypocrisie, which some do, into the sincerity of obedience, which all should professe; for though none of them be puritanized into Donatisme, but can protest it their necessary obligation to reverence the Kings person, yet most are so far sublimated from the dross of superstition, that they cannot without defiling their consciences vaile to the train of his ceremonious Titles, they can easily concoct supream Governours, dryly swallowed, but with the sawce of Ecclesiastical causes it quite nauseates their stomachs, and the name of head is more offensive to their palates, then perfumes are to the nostrils of those that are grieved with an Histerical passion; a monstrous straw for such mighty men to stumble at, which may be put in the same ballance with that of their schismatical Predecessours in the conference at *Hampton Court*, who were scandalized with the word absolution in the *Liturgy*, but well content with the Term *Remission of sins*.

What difference there is betwixt supream Governour and Head in a notional acception, is more fit for Grammatical  
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Criticks, then politick Christians to inquire, as they are complicated in one subject, and determined to a constant oneness both of action and end, they must by the rules of honesty as well as Art, be construed Synonymous, and in a promiscuous manner adjudged to contract their literal variety into an identity of sense.

Indeed we cannot deny but the Title of supream Head was first given to King *Henry* the Eight by the Pope, who being by his own institution in the world (as the soul is in the body by Gods Creation) *Totus in toto*, and not onely *singularis*, but *universis major*, cannot be supposed to part with a piece of himself but for his own ends; yet we conceive it no trespasse against any Canon, either of Scripture or reason, to convert that to a good use, which was first bestowed to an ill purpose; but for Presbyters to take that away for the better esteem of their own authority, which was given by the Pope, to disgrace the Kings jurisdiction in the Church, is no lesse unreasonable to devise, then irreligious to practise.

That great Bulwark of objection, (Christ is the sole Head of the Church, *ergo* no other can have the Title) which hath been presumed too strong for an army of Schoolmen to beat down, must necessarily yield upon terms to our side. For although as the Church is internally considered in respect of the kingdome of Grace, and our Saviour Christ as Lord thereof, by right of Redemption, ruling the hearts of the faithful by his spirit, there is no subjection allowable, nor headship to be attributed but to him only; yet as he is King by right of Creation, loving an Imperial Sovereignty over all his creatures, and the Church in a militant condition, which (by reason of an inseperable commixture of good



and bad, and common relation of the inward and outward man) doth necessarily require an external policy to maintain a uniformity and order in the worship of God, so he hath ordained his Vicegerent on earth to whom both Clergy and Laity must be subject.

- And in this qualification of sense Kings may be truly stiled supream Heads in causes Ecclesiastical, within their Dominions; Thus *Samuel* called *Saul* the Head of the Tribes of Israel, *1 Sam.* 15. 17. which *in eodem signo rationis* doth imply all persons, as well Ecclesiastical as civil in that Commonwealth, to be his subordinate members. And that the Priests were subject in their very Offices to the supream power of their magistrates, *2 Chron.* 8. *Solomons* Acts in ordering their courses, and appointing the *Levites* to their charges, (who in manifestation of their duty are said not to depart from the commandement of the King) do sufficiently evidence, whose authority likewise to punish sins of the first table, that refer to Religion as well as those of the second, which belong to humane society.

Gods own prescript Laws to *Moses*, *Deut.* 13. *Deut.* 17. *Levit.* 17. are the authentique seals to confirm, whereunto we may annex that fact of our Saviour Christ himself, chastising the *Jewish* Pedlers, by vertue of his divine Royalty, for profanation of the Temple, as an exemplary proof beyond all exception.

Having pickt out the pith of their Divinity in the former objection, there resteth one hard Argument more to break, wherein lies the marrow of their Logick, if the power, say they, in Ecclesiastical matters be proper to the supream magistrate as a Magistrate, then it should belong to all magistrates, and consequently to the heathen: the definition of



a magistrate being one in Christian and Heathen Princes; but this would be both sinful and ridiculous to assert, *ergo* that cannot lawfully be maintained.

Truly this is a witty sophisme, which deserves the Reply of an ingenious Respondent in the Philosophers School, *salte profecto, sed falso quidem*. I presume the same learning which qualified them to oppose others, may enable them to answer themselves in this point; for if their consequence be good, Baals Priests had as much right to the service of the Temple, as the *Levitical* Clergy-men, neither can our Protestant ministers have a better Title to the dispensation of Christs ordinances, then the officers of the *Romish* Church do now claim.

Therefore if they will honestly defend their own as we do the Kings authority in the Church, they must acknowledge their argument to be contrary to the principles of art, as their opinion is to the precepts of Religion; for when a Restrictive Term is adjoynd to an equivocal subject (as magistrate is) To argue from an indefinite to a universal, is an illegal consequence, the reason is, because what is attributed by such a note of limitation, is not an absolute but a compare propriety, which doth *convenire subjecto mediante alio*, as the power of the King in causes Ecclesiastical is not proper to him, simply *secundum naturam*, but Relatively as he is a true Christian Magistrate; according to which univocation, if their Argument had been formed, the consequence would be logically true.

But as we do appropriate this power onely to Kings truly Christian, So I must acquaint them that the Heathen subjects had such a Reverend respect to the authority of the supream magistrate in matters of their idolatrous Religion, that *Ari-*

*Psalm. l. 3.* could say *Θεὸς ὁ Θεὸς τῶν Θεῶν καὶ ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῶν Βασιλέων*. The King is Lord and Ruler of things that pertain to the Gods.

To conclude, I wish those men, who ( like the first matter have an indifferency to all forms, and are so unfixedly disposed in Religion, that they can be content with the *Sichemites*, to be circumcised for their advantage, would ( not for wrath but for conscience sake ) give a seasonable Testimony of their obedience by a willing conformity to the Kings power in Ecclesiastical causes, that the Church may be no longer grieved with the rapine of forreign wolves, or spoil of domestick foxes, but that sound doctrine may flourish within her gates, and true discipline be established in her borders, to which end the Lord send us a speedy Restauration of our ancient Government by the hands of *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua*, the King and the Bishop, that as we are baptized in one faith, so we may be subject to one Rule, & as we are of one body, we may be all of one mind, to worship God both in the purity and beauty of holiness, and to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. *Amen.*

F I N I S.